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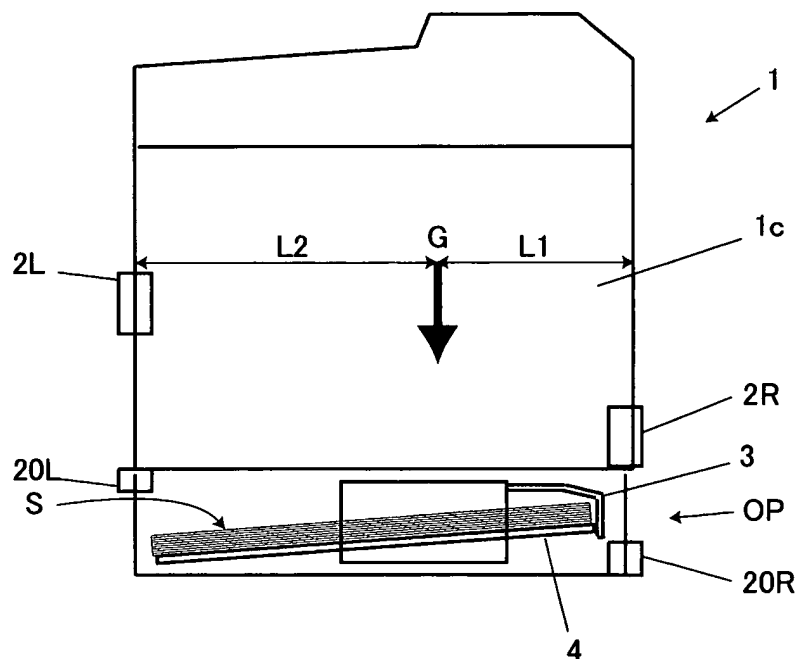
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(54) Image forming apparatus and sheet feeding device

(57) A second side face opposes to a first face. A first handle (2R) is provided on the first side face at a first position and adapted to be used to lift an image forming apparatus. A second handle (2L) is provided on the second side face at a second position which is higher than

the first position, and adapted to be used to lift the image forming apparatus together with the first handle (2R). A center of gravity (G) for the image forming apparatus is located closer to the first side face than the second side face.

FIG. 1A



Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to an image forming apparatus such as a printer, a facsimile, a copying machine, and a sheet feeding device which is selectively installed in the image forming apparatus as required.

[0002] Generally, the image forming apparatus is provided with handles for lifting it, at right and left sides (or in front and back, the case is the same in the following description) of the apparatus.

[0003] Japanese Design Registration No. 1183592, for example, discloses an image forming apparatus in which such handles are provided at the same level.

[0004] Generally, a center of gravity for the image forming apparatus is rarely positioned at the center in a horizontal direction, but usually biased to the left or to the right.

[0005] In the image forming apparatus, in which the handles for lifting the apparatus are provided at the same level, there is such a problem that in a case where two persons, for example, lift and carry the apparatus, a larger weight is exerted on the person who handles the handle at the side where the center of gravity is biased.

[0006] There is also the same problem described above in the sheet feeding device which is adapted to be attached to the image forming apparatus to feed a recording medium thereto, and to store recording media.

[0007] Japanese Patent Publication No. 6-329270A discloses an image forming apparatus or a sheet feeding device, which is provided with a separating hook for feeding an uppermost one of recording media stack in a main body of the image forming apparatus.

[0008] In such an image forming apparatus or sheet feeding device, as shown in Fig. 2A, the handle 2R' at a side where the separating hook 3 is provided and the handle 2L' at an opposite side thereto is provided at the same level. Therefore, in a case where the center of gravity G is biased toward the side where the separating hook 3 is provided, there is such probability that a bottom 1a of the apparatus at the side where the separating hook 3 is provided may first strike an installation face FL, when the apparatus is placed on the installation face FL.

[0009] When the bottom 1a of the apparatus at the side where the separating hook 3 is provided is first struck the installation face FL as shown in Fig. 2B, this will enhance such probability that recording media S stacked inside the apparatus may rapidly move toward the separating hook 3 due to a shock at the time of placing the apparatus on the installation face FL, thereby colliding with the separating hook 3, and the separating hook 3 may be damaged by the collision.

[0010] The separating hook 3 is provided for the purpose of applying flexure to both corner parts of the uppermost sheet of the recording medium S thereby to separate the uppermost sheet from lower sheets of the recording media S, and so, accuracies of the separating

hook 3 in shape and in position are important. Therefore, in a case where the accuracies in its shape and position become out of order, receiving the impact of the recording media S, recording media S may not be properly separated, and that the recording medium S may not be fed to a proper position of the main body 1c of the image forming apparatus.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] It is therefore an object of the invention to provide an image forming apparatus and an optional sheet feeding device in which weights to be exerted on the two handles can be equalized.

[0012] It is also an object of the invention to provide an image forming apparatus and an optional sheet feeding device in which the separating hook is unlikely to be damaged.

[0013] In order to attain the above described objects, according to the invention, there is provided an image forming apparatus comprising:

a first side face;

a second side face, opposing the first side face;

a first handle, provided on the first side face at a first position and adapted to be used to lift the image forming apparatus; and

a second handle, provided on the second side face at a second position which is higher than the first position, and adapted to be used to lift the image forming apparatus together with the first handle,

wherein a center of gravity for the image forming apparatus is located closer to the first side face than the second side face.

[0014] According to the invention, there is also provided a sheet feeding device adapted to be attached to an image forming apparatus to feed a recording medium thereto, the sheet feeding device comprising:

a first side face;

a second side face, opposing the first side face;

a first handle, provided on the first side face at a first position and adapted to be used to lift the sheet feeding device; and

a second handle, provided on the second side face at a second position which is higher than the first position, and adapted to be used to lift the sheet feeding device together with the first handle;

wherein a center of gravity for the sheet feeding device is located closer to the first side face than the second side face.

[0015] With the above configurations, when the apparatus is lifted by handling the two handles, heights of the two handles will be substantially the same, and the center of gravity will move relatively toward the handle which is provided at the higher position.

[0016] As a result, the weights to be exerted on the two handles can be equalized.

[0017] The image forming apparatus may further comprise:

a sheet feeding device, adapted to store recording media which are to be fed to a main body of the image forming apparatus;
a separating hook, provided in the sheet feeding device at a position closer to the first side face than the second side face, and operable to separate one of the recording media which is to be fed to the main body.

[0018] The sheet feeding device may further comprise:

a separating hook, provided in the sheet feeding device at a position closer to the first side face than the second side face, and operable to separate one of the recording media which is to be fed to a main body of the image forming apparatus.

[0019] With the above configurations, when the apparatus is placed on an installation face, the apparatus is highly liable to strike the installation face from a bottom thereof at the side of the handle which is provided at the higher position, that is, at the opposite side to the side where the separating hook is provided.

[0020] Therefore, such phenomenon that the sheets of the recording media which are contained inside the apparatus may rapidly move toward the separating hook due to a shock at the time of placing the apparatus on the installation face, thereby colliding with the separating hook will be unlikely to happen. As a result, probability that the separating hook may be damaged with the collision will be advantageously decreased.

[0021] According to the invention, there is also provided an image forming apparatus comprising:

a first side face;
a second side face, opposing the first side face;
a first handle, provided on the first side face at a first position and adapted to be used to lift the image forming apparatus;
a second handle, provided on the second side face at a second position which is higher than the first position, and adapted to be used to lift the image forming apparatus together with the first handle; and
a separating hook provided at a position closer to the first side face than the second side face, and operable to separate one of the recording media which is to be fed to a main body of the image forming apparatus.

[0022] According to the invention, there is also provided a sheet feeding device adapted to be attached to an image forming apparatus to feed a recording medium thereto, the sheet feeding device comprising:

a first side face; a second side face, opposing the first side face;

a first handle, provided on the first side face at a first position and adapted to be used to lift the sheet feeding device;

a second handle, provided on the second side face at a second position which is higher than the first position, and adapted to be used to lift the sheet feeding device together with the first handle; and

a separating hook provided at a position provided at a position closer to the first side face than the second side face, and operable to separate one of the recording media which is to be fed to a main body of the image forming apparatus.

[0023] With the above configurations, when the apparatus is placed on the installation face, the apparatus is highly liable to strike the installation face from the bottom thereof at the side of the handle which is provided at the higher position, that is, at the opposite side to the side where the separating hook is provided regardless of the position where the center of gravity for the apparatus is.

[0024] Therefore, such phenomenon that the sheets of the recording media which are contained inside the apparatus may rapidly move toward the separating hook due to a shock at the time of placing the apparatus on the installation face, thereby colliding with the separating hook will be unlikely to happen regardless of the position where the center of gravity for the apparatus is. As a result, the probability that the separating hook may be damaged with the collision will be advantageously decreased.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0025] The above objects and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent by describing in detail preferred exemplary embodiments thereof with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Fig. 1A is a schematic front view of an image forming apparatus according to a first embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 1B is a schematic front view of the image forming apparatus of Fig. 1A, showing a state that the apparatus is inlined;

Fig. 2A is a schematic front view of an image forming apparatus according to a related art;

Fig. 2B is a schematic front view of the image forming apparatus of Fig. 2A, showing a state that the apparatus is inlined;

Fig. 3A is a schematic front view of an image forming apparatus according to a second embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 3B is a schematic front view of the image forming apparatus of Fig. 3A, showing a state that the apparatus is inlined.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

(First Embodiment)

[0026] Embodiments of the invention will be described below in detail with reference to the accompanying drawings.

[0027] As shown in Fig. 1A, an image forming apparatus 1 according to a first embodiment of the invention has a center of gravity G which is biased to the right in a horizontal direction. Handles 2R and 2L for lifting the apparatus are respectively provided at the right and left side of the apparatus.

[0028] In the apparatus of this type, provided that the handles 2L', 2R' are provided at the same level as shown in Fig. 2A, in a case where two persons lift and carry the apparatus with these handles, a larger weight will be exerted on the person at the side where the center of gravity G is biased, that is, the person who handles the right handle 2R', in this case.

[0029] There is also the same problem described above in the sheet feeding device OP which is adapted to be attached to the image forming apparatus 1 to feed a recording medium S thereto, and to store recording media S.

[0030] Under the circumstances, in this embodiment, the handle at the side where the center of gravity G is biased, that is, the right handle 2R, in this case, is provided at a lower position than the other handle 2L, as shown in Fig. 1A. In a case where the apparatus is the sheet feeding device (for example, in a case where the sheet feeding device denoted by a sign OP in Fig. 1A is the sheet feeding device), the structure will be also the same. In this case, the right and left handles are denoted by 20R and 20L.

[0031] According to this structure, when the apparatus 1 is lifted by handling the two handles 2L, 2R, heights H of the two handles 2R, 2L will be substantially the same, as shown in Fig. 1B, and the center of gravity G will move relatively toward the handle 2L which is provided at the higher position.

[0032] As shown in Fig. 1A, provided that a distance between the center of gravity G and the handle 2R in the horizontal direction is L1, and a distance between the center of gravity G and the handle 2L in the horizontal direction is L2, the distance L2 has been apparently larger than the distance L1 ($L2 > L1$) in a state before the apparatus is lifted. However, when the two handles 2L, 2R are positioned at the substantially same height H, as shown in Fig. 1B, the position of the center of gravity G will move relatively toward the higher handle 2L in the horizontal direction, whereby the distance between the center of gravity G and the handle 2R in the horizontal direction becomes L1' ($> L1$), and the distance between the center of gravity G and the handle 2L becomes L2' ($< L2$), so that the distance L1' may become equal to the distance L2' ($L1' = L2'$).

[0033] As a result, the weights to be exerted on the

two handles 2L, 2R will be equalized.

[0034] Specifically, as compared with the handle 2R at the side where the separating hook 3 is provided, the handle 2L at the opposite side is provided at the higher position, as shown in Fig. 1A. Accordingly, when the apparatus 1 is placed on the installation face FL, the apparatus 1 will be highly liable to strike the installation face FL from the bottom 1b of the apparatus at the side of the handle 2L which is provided at the higher position, as shown in Fig. 1B.

[0035] Therefore, such phenomenon that the sheets of the recording media S which are contained inside the apparatus 1 may rapidly move toward the separating hook 3 due to a shock at the time of placing the apparatus 1 on the installation face FL, thereby colliding with the separating hook 3 will be unlikely to happen. As a result, the probability that the separating hook 3 may be damaged with the collision will be decreased.

[0036] In the drawings, denoted by numeral 4 is a push-up plate for pushing up the stacked sheets of the recording media S toward the sheet feeding roller which is not shown.

(Second Embodiment)

[0037] Next, a second embodiment of the invention will be described. Components similar to those in the first embodiment will be designated by the same reference numerals and repetitive explanations for those will be omitted.

[0038] In the second embodiment, the handle 2R at the side where the separating hook 3 is provided is provided at a lower level than the handle 2L at the opposite side regardless of the center of gravity of the apparatus, as shown in Fig. 3A.

[0039] According to this structure, it will be highly probable that the apparatus 1 may strike the installation face FL from the bottom 1b of the apparatus at the side of the handle 2L which is provided at the higher position, that is, the opposite side to the side where the separating hook 3 is provided regardless of the position where the center of gravity for the apparatus is.

[0040] Therefore, such phenomenon that the sheets of the recording medium S which are contained inside the apparatus 1 may rapidly move toward the separating hook 3 due to a shock at the time of placing the apparatus 1 on the installation face FL, thereby colliding with the separating hook 3 will be unlikely to happen regardless of the position where the center of gravity for the apparatus is. As a result, such probability that the separating hook 3 may be damaged with the collision will be decreased.

[0041] Although the invention has been heretofore described referring to the embodiments, the invention is not limited to the above described embodiment, but various modifications can be appropriately made within a scope of the gist of the invention.

Claims

1. An image forming apparatus comprising:

a first side face;
 a second side face, opposing the first side face;
 a first handle, provided on the first side face at
 a first position and adapted to be used to lift the
 image forming apparatus; and
 a second handle, provided on the second side
 face at a second position which is higher than
 the first position, and adapted to be used to lift
 the image forming apparatus together with the
 first handle,

wherein a center of gravity for the image forming
 apparatus is located closer to the first side face than
 the second side face.

2. An image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 1
 further comprising:

a sheet feeding device, adapted to store record-
 ing media which are to be fed to a main body of
 the image forming apparatus;
 a separating hook, provided in the sheet feeding
 device at a position closer to the first side face
 than the second side face, and operable to sep-
 arate one of the recording media which is to be
 fed to the main body.

3. A sheet feeding device adapted to be attached to an
 image forming apparatus to feed a recording medium
 thereto, the sheet feeding device comprising:

a first side face;
 a second side face, opposing the first side face;
 a first handle, provided on the first side face at
 a first position and adapted to be used to lift the
 sheet feeding device; and
 a second handle, provided on the second side
 face at a second position which is higher than
 the first position, and adapted to be used to lift
 the sheet feeding device together with the first
 handle;

wherein a center of gravity for the sheet feeding de-
 vice is located closer to the first side face than the
 second side face.

4. A sheet feeding device as set forth in claim 3 further
 comprising:

a separating hook, provided in the sheet feeding
 device at a position closer to the first side face
 than the second side face, and operable to sep-
 arate one of the recording media which is to be
 fed to a main body of the image forming appa-

ratus.

5. An image forming apparatus comprising:

a first side face;
 a second side face, opposing the first side face;
 a first handle, provided on the first side face at
 a first position and adapted to be used to lift the
 image forming apparatus;
 a second handle, provided on the second side
 face at a second position which is higher than
 the first position, and adapted to be used to lift
 the image forming apparatus together with the
 first handle; and
 a separating hook provided at a position closer
 to the first side face than the second side face,
 and operable to separate one of the recording
 media which is to be fed to a main body of the
 image forming apparatus.

6. A sheet feeding device adapted to be attached to an
 image forming apparatus to feed a recording medium
 thereto, the sheet feeding device comprising:

a first side face;
 a second side face, opposing the first side face;
 a first handle, provided on the first side face at
 a first position and adapted to be used to lift the
 sheet feeding device;
 a second handle, provided on the second side
 face at a second position which is higher than
 the first position, and adapted to be used to lift
 the sheet feeding device together with the first
 handle; and
 a separating hook provided at a position provid-
 ed at a position closer to the first side face than
 the second side face, and operable to separate
 one of the recording media which is to be fed to
 a main body of the image forming apparatus.

FIG. 1A

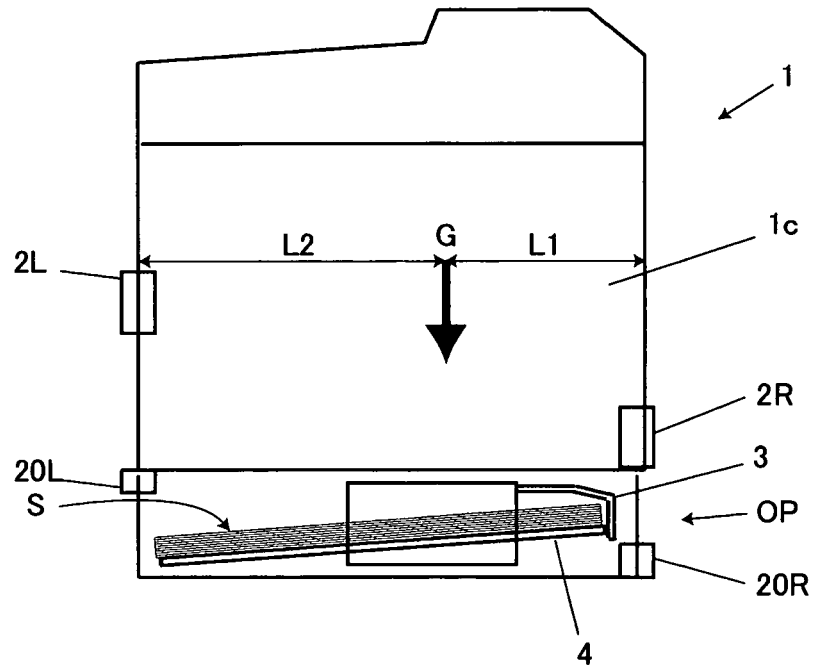


FIG. 1B

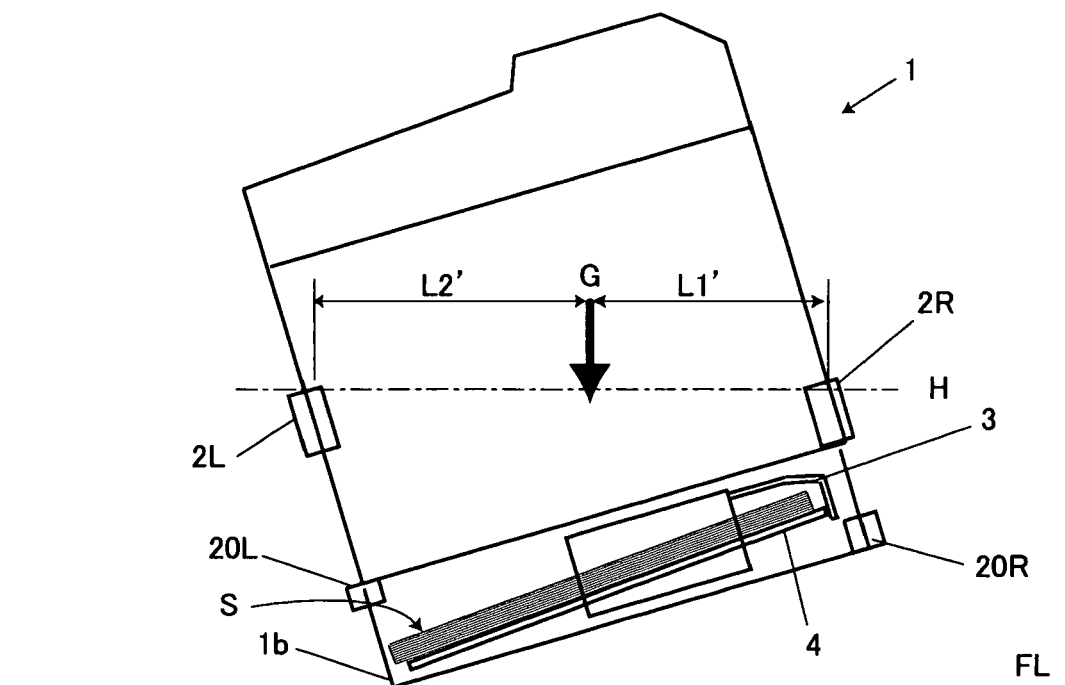


FIG. 2A

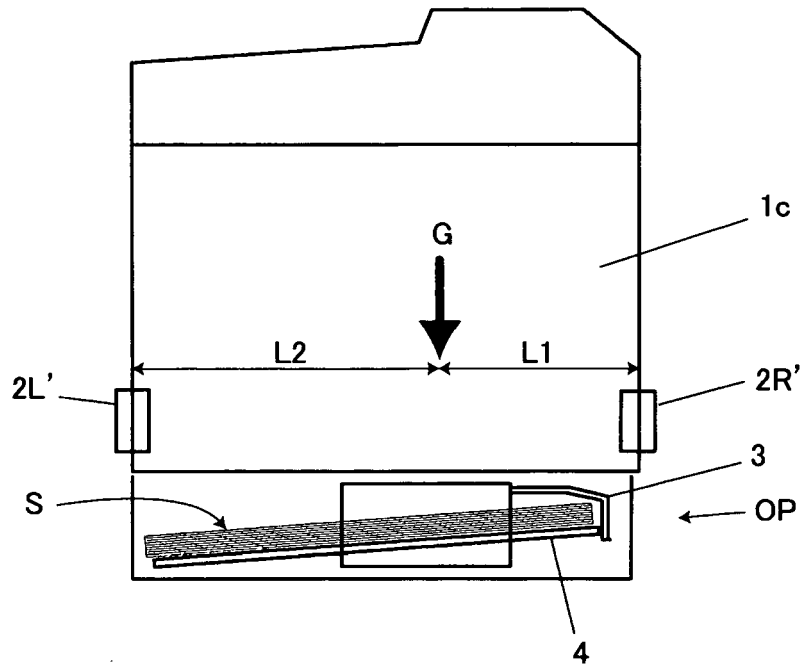


FIG. 2B

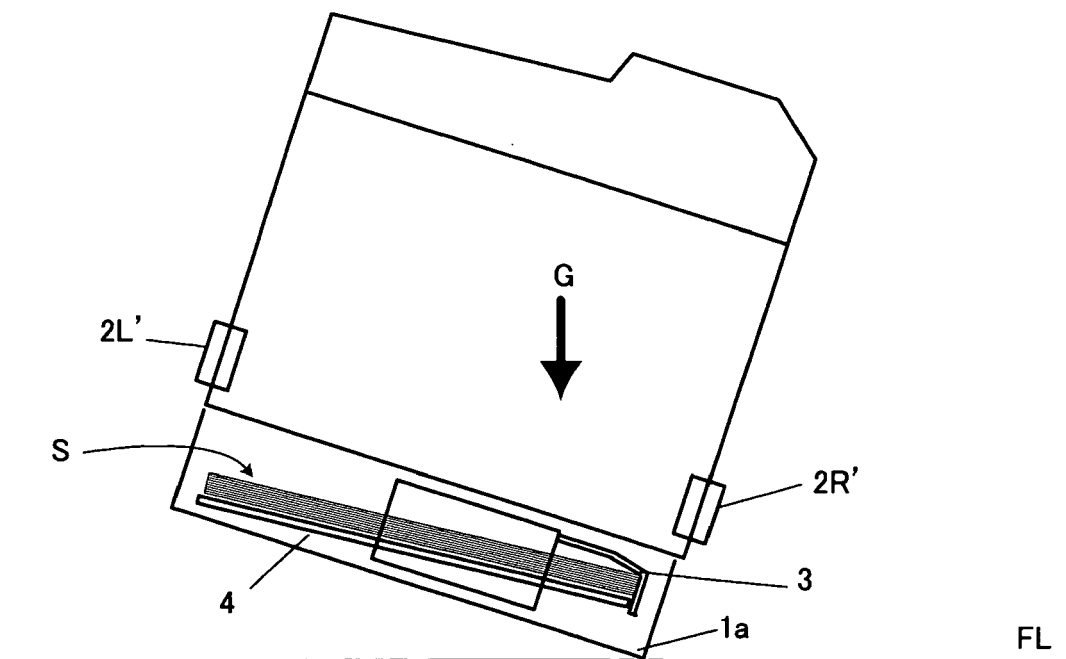


FIG. 3A

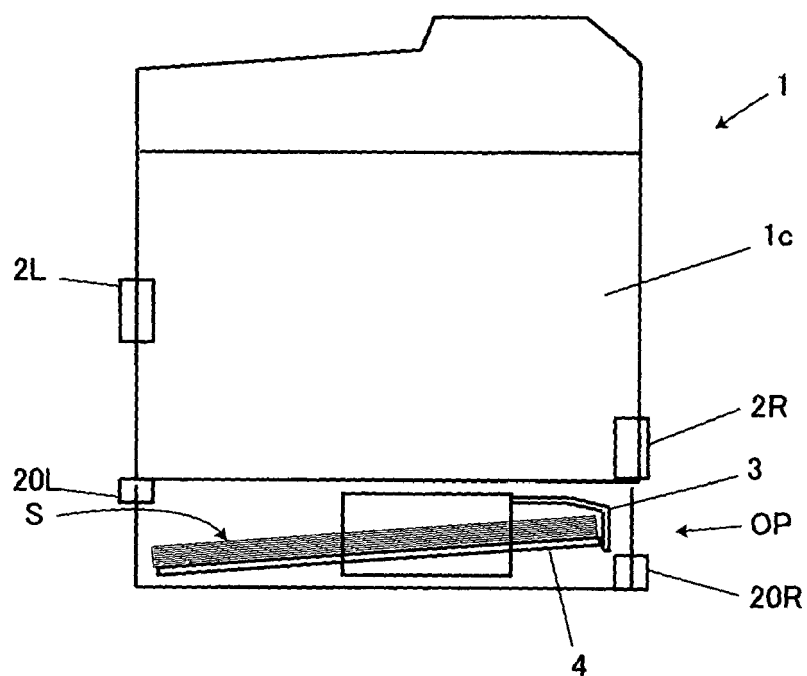
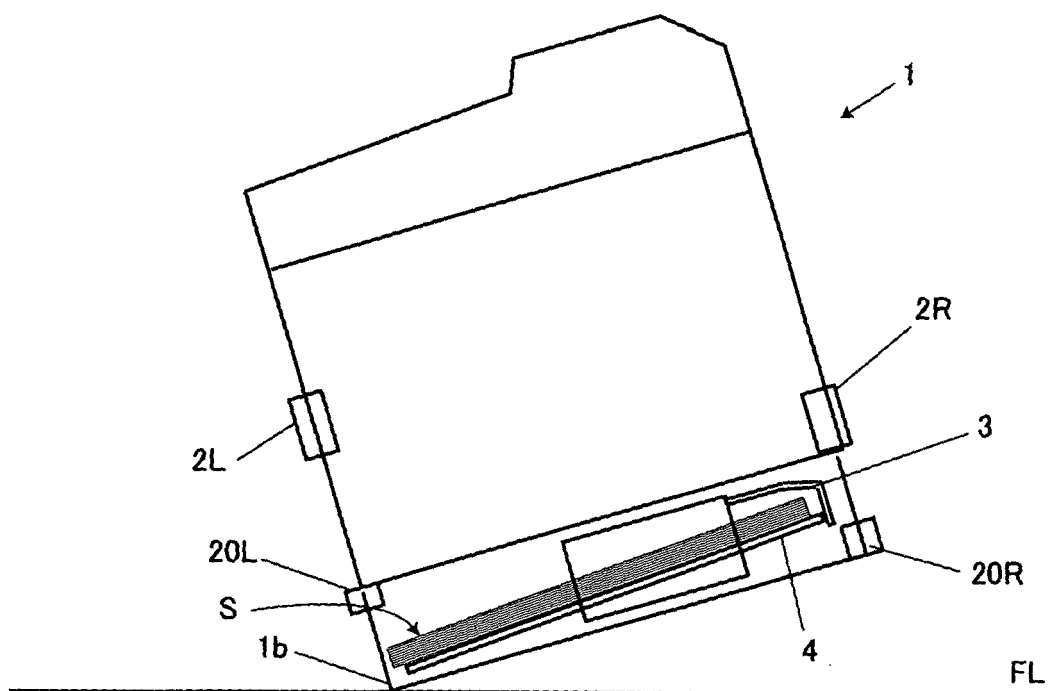


FIG. 3B





European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 06 00 0999

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 010, no. 041 (P-429), 18 February 1986 (1986-02-18) & JP 60 188963 A (CANON KK), 26 September 1985 (1985-09-26) * abstract; figures 1-6 *	1,3,5,6	G03G15/00 B41J29/13
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			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			G03G B41J
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 23 February 2006	Examiner Kising, A
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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EPO FORM 1503 03.82 (P04C01)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 06 00 0999

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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23-02-2006

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